--LIVE FROM THE POPPY FIELD NIGHTCLUB IN LAS VEGAS AS TONIGHT, PEOPLE OF THE WORLD ARE UNITED IN JOYOUS CELEBRATION UPON LEARNING OF THE REUNIFICATION OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES, THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS!
TRULY, THIS IS THE DAWN OF A NEW AND, FINALLY, HEROIC AGE.
YEAH, MAN... ALL THIS GRIM AN' GRITTY STUFF? ALL THESE SUPPOSEDLY "GOOD GUYS" WHO DO BAD THINGS IN ORDER TO DO GOOD? THAT'S OVER, MAN!
IT'S TIME TO LEEEEET THE LIGHT SHIIIINE! LEEEEET THE LIGHT SHINE IIINN!
PUNISHER? YEAH, RIGHT... THAT GUY IS SCARY AND GROSS. GIVE ME THOR ANY DAY!
WOOT! WOOT! HOLLAH ATCHA GIRL!
IT'S JUST...IT'S JUST THE WAY IT OUGHTTA BE, RIGHT? I MEAN, WE'VE BEEN WITHOUT OUR HEROES FOR TOO LONG, MAN! WHO'RE THE KIDS SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKIN' UP TO, HUH?
LONZO TOUTOLOS – CLUB OWNER
'CAUSE IT SURE AIN'T DIRTBAGS LIKE DEADPOOL...

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN of MARVEL®

Throughout 2010, Marvel is proud to shine the spotlight on our rich cast of female super heroes as well as the women working in comics today. Every month look to this page for a new interview with one of the top women in comics today.

MARVEL: *First of all, who is your favorite Woman of Marvel?*

KELLY SUE DECONNICK: I'm gonna go with Marvel editor Jeanine Schaefer. For my money, she's as brave as any Avenger and smarter than, oh, a good half of them, anyway. Plus, you'd be a fool to cross her and I do like a little menace in my characters.

On the fictional side of things, at the moment I'd probably go with Satana. Demon daughter with Daddy issues. What's not to love? I'm also fond of Bendis's take on Spider-Woman. There's a rawness, a vulnerability there that I find appealing. Oh—and Rogue! Call me predictable, but I do like Rogue. I want to have her over to the house and feed her spaghetti…I can have five favorites, right?

MARVEL: *Over the years, the women of Marvel have changed & grown, becoming some of the strongest characters in the world of super heroes. Is there a defining moment for you regarding any of our super heroines?*

KSD: The Scarlet Witch single-handedly wiping out mutantkind…?

MARVEL: *As part of the Women of Marvel celebration, you have written a one-shot of Thor's on-and-off romantic interest and warrior in her own right, Sif. What can you tell us about where the character is in your story?*

KSD: She's been through so much—what, with Loki stealing her body and trapping her in a dying woman…it's impossible to come out of something like that without a little Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is the story of Sif finding her way through the woods and back to her full stature.

MARVEL: *You're also penning a story for BLACK WIDOW in Enter the Heroic Age. What attracts you to a character like Natasha Romanov?*

KSD: I think it's the same kind of thing that draws me to Modesty Blaise or James Bond—the confidence, the competence, the unqualified cool of the super spy. I envy Natasha her swagger.

MARVEL: *You've done a lot of work within the manga world. What is it about that medium that attracts female readership? And do you think there is a sensibility that can be taken from that and applied to bring some of that audience to mainstream super hero comics?*

KSD: Mainstream American super hero comics and manga are the same medium—they're comics. The question compares a medium to a genre. I think we could actually take manga out of the equation and ask why women and girls make up a significantly larger percentage of the comic-reading audience than the Big Two comic-reading audience—and unfortunately, I don't think there's a pithy answer. Probably the biggest hurdles to new readership, period—gender aside—are continuity and current distribution models. Take a potential new reader of either gender into a comic shop and watch their eyes glaze over. It's impossible not to be overwhelmed. Where do you even start? Say you have an interest in a particular character—okay, but there are four, maybe five titles that feature that character and current issues on display are number, what? 603, 24, 12 and 3 (of 5). Huh? New readers literally need a guide.

Conversely, point them in the direction of the manga or graphic novel section at their already-familiar local bookstore and neatly arranged in rows are books with already-familiar series descriptions printed on the back covers. You find a title that sounds interesting, read the cover and, if you like it, buy volume one. Easy peasy. Overcoming the fact that manga titles read backwards is actually easier than overcoming 50 years of character history and comics culture.

MARVEL: *Finally, what would you say to those female fans & creators who still think there is a "glass ceiling" or that comics is strictly a boy's club? Any advice for breaking in?*

KSD: I'm afraid I'm of the mind that there is still a glass ceiling; but there is also an open door. At this point in my career that ceiling is not something I find myself bumping up against--no matter what your gender, you've got to earn your shot at the top floor and it's way too early for me. But I'd be I'd be lying if I said, you know, "Chin up, gals! Those days are behind us!"

That said, my great-grandmother was a girl when women got the vote in this country. My great-grandmother passed away when I was in college. Look at the strides that were made just in her lifetime! I think of my daughter and what's possible in her lifetime and I tear up a little. I would give those female fans and creators the same advice I hope to give my daughter: embrace your passions. Be authentically yourself. It's okay to be daunted; it's okay to be afraid—move forward anyway. If this is what excites you, if what you want to do is make comics, then make comics. If you want to make super hero comics, I think that's great. There is nothing inherently masculine about heroism. Let me be the one to give you permission to scratch that itch.

And when someone tells you that science fiction and action stories aren't for girls, or women aren't good comic creators because they're not as visually oriented as men, or you're, you know, pretty good for a girl—don't let it wound you. Let it be fuel for your fire.

MARVEL
TM & © 2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved.